

# MENDIVE

REVISTA DE EDUCACIÓN

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## The teaching of idiomatic expressions from a new language learning culture

### La enseñanza de frases idiomáticas desde una nueva cultura del aprendizaje de lenguas

### O ensino de frases idiomáticas a partir de uma nova cultura de aprendizagem de línguas

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#### ABSTRACT

Idioms are a type of writing in which the meaning differs from what the phrase apparently expresses, these expressions are the key in defining the real use of English. The objective of this article is to determine the incidence of idiomatic

expressions in the teaching-learning process of real English use from the New English language culture, in order to develop the communicative, interactive and intercultural competence from the sociocultural context in which third-year students of the career Education Foreign Languages at the University of Pinar del Río. The quantitative and qualitative paradigms were used; as well as theoretical methods: the dialectical, the historical, the logical, the systemic and the modeling, the analysis and the synthesis; as empirical methods: documentary analysis, class observation and survey. A strategy was proposed consisting of a system of actions that focus the use of understandable idiomatic phrases and the support of interactive tasks for students to carry out inside and outside the classroom. The implementation of the strategy revealed satisfactory results in terms of the objective of learning English and its dimensions of linguistic and communicative skills, the culture of learning through reflection and interaction, and the contextualization of the language through different cultures.

**Keywords:** idiomatic phrases; English; real English use.

#### RESUMEN

Las frases idiomáticas son un tipo de escritura en el cual el significado difiere de lo que aparentemente pueda expresar la frase; estas frases son clave en la definición del uso real del inglés. El objetivo de esta investigación es determinar la incidencia de las frases idiomáticas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del uso real del inglés desde la nueva cultura del aprendizaje de lenguas, para potenciar el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa, interactiva e intercultural desde el contexto sociocultural en que aprenden los estudiantes de tercer año de la carrera Educación Lenguas Extranjeras, de la Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermandades Saíz Montes de Oca". Se emplearon los paradigmas cuantitativo y cualitativo, así

como métodos teóricos: el dialéctico-materialista, el histórico-lógico, el sistémico, la modelación, el análisis y la síntesis; como métodos empíricos: el análisis documental, la observación a clase y la encuesta. Se propuso una estrategia compuesta por un sistema de acciones que focalizan la utilización de frases idiomáticas comprensibles y el apoyo de tareas interactivas para que los estudiantes realicen dentro y fuera del aula. La implementación de la estrategia develó resultados satisfactorios en términos del objetivo del aprendizaje del inglés y sus dimensiones de habilidades lingüísticas y comunicativas, la cultura del aprendizaje mediante la reflexión y la interacción y la contextualización de la lengua mediante las diversas culturas.

**Palabras clave:** frases idiomáticas; inglés; uso real.

#### RESUMO

As frases idiomáticas são um tipo de escrita em que o significado difere do que a frase aparentemente pode expressar, estas frases são fundamentais para definir o uso real do inglês. O objetivo desta investigação é determinar a incidência de frases idiomáticas no processo de ensino e aprendizagem do uso real do inglês da Nova cultura de aprendizagem de línguas, para melhorar o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa, interactiva e intercultural a partir do contexto sociocultural em que os estudantes do terceiro ano do ensino de línguas estrangeiras na Universidade de Pinar del Río aprendem. Foram utilizados os paradigmas quantitativos e qualitativos, bem como métodos teóricos: dialéctico-materialista, histórico-lógico, sistémico, modelação, análise e síntese; como métodos empíricos: análise documental, observação em sala de aula e inquérito. Foi proposta uma estratégia composta por um sistema de acções que se centram na utilização de frases idiomáticas compreensíveis e no apoio de tarefas interactivas para os alunos realizarem dentro e fora da sala de aula. A implementação da estratégia

revelou resultados satisfatórios em termos do objectivo de aprender inglês e as suas dimensões de competências linguísticas e comunicativas, a cultura de aprendizagem através da reflexão e interacção, e a contextualização da língua através de diferentes culturas.

**Palavras-chave:** frases idiomáticas; inglês; uso real.

#### INTRODUCTION

The human being is a social being that has the need to interact with his fellow men. In order to facilitate communication, he has created a new phraseology, that is, idiomatic phrases that are related to customs, beliefs, stories, etc. These, in turn, are used in a specific context, because they have figurative meaning. Through these sentences, language people express their mood, feelings and point of view spontaneously. Mastering another language is essential to enrich knowledge, awaken interest and desire to learn a second language. The need to communicate with speakers of other countries is of paramount importance to the development of many aspects, such as: political, economic, social and cultural rights; For this reason, the need arises to include the teaching of the English language in the educational system.

One of the fundamental reasons for carrying out this research was that in the teaching of Comprehensive English Practice, at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" the teaching of idiomatic phrases is not emphasized, limiting oral communication of the students. On the other hand, the phrases that appear in books for the most part are no longer part of those used by English speakers, due to the

rapidity with which oral language evolves, and there is a need for new materials that focus on the teaching of idiomatic phrases from the actual use of English.

The present article aims to determine the incidence of idiomatic phrases with the teaching-learning process of the actual use of English, promoting the development of communicative, interactive and intercultural competence from the sociocultural context in which third-year students of the Foreign Languages Education career, from the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" learn.

Of course, there are many definitions by authors about idiomatic phrases, but the definition offered by Bustos, A. (2007) is assumed, who points out that idiomatic phrases: "They are sequences of words whose meaning is not compositional, that is, the meaning of the phrase does not derive from its components, they cannot be translated in an exact literal way, but you have to know how to interpret them in order to understand their meaning" (p.1). As the author, the sentences language are meaningless composite, meaning that its meaning does not come from each of its terms.

The idiomatic phrases are specific to each language; they can share information either historical or cultural, while helping to deepen cultural referents with characteristics that may differ from one language to another. Something that only makes to this topic even more interesting is the way they can transmit specific information, whether cultural or personal. More than a thousand idiomatic phrases appear in the world every second, only in the English language we can count an estimated existence of 25, 000 idiomatic phrases, used repeatedly on a daily basis by native speakers of the language.

Native English speakers do not require grammar rules to speak and, in particular, making use of idiomatic phrases. The easiest way is to learn the phrases in context and passively (Acosta, Vigil, Gómez, 2019). Likewise, usage changes as fast as the linguistic system and as Hymes (1972) has pointed out: "There are rules of use without which grammar rules are useless and inoperative" (p.6). This means that you do not have to be aware of rules or memorize boring and tedious lists. All of the above includes idiomatic phrases as one of the dimensions of the actual use of English.

### **Techniques teachers use to teach idiomatic and phrases**

1. *Expository technique*: consists of oral presentation by the teacher; it is the most used in schools. To be active in its application, student participation must be stimulated and the teacher must use an appropriate tone of voice and good motivation to attract the students' attention. This technique favors the development of self-control and language. It is a variant of the forum, where discussion takes place on a topic, event or issue heard and / or seen a mass media (disco, theater, film, etc Etera).

2. *Technical of representation of roles or set of roles* : allows the students to experience countless sensations not only intellectually, but also physical and emotional, being this technique to of a great help in the process of teaching English language learning, through which students apply idiomatic phrases in the script of the roles to be dramatized (Araujo, 2017). The *RPG* is a group dynamic technique that aims to help develop the social perspective and empathy by representing different roles in conflict situations where different positions that have to be combined intervene.

3. *Visual techniques*: include photographs, drawings, miming and gestures. One of the most popular visual techniques is the so-called *Key Word Technique*. Rizq (2015) suggests that this technique takes advantage of the ability to produce mental images. It consists of associating the word from the second language with a word from the mother tongue that is pronounced or spelled in a similar way, although they are not necessarily related in terms of meaning. However, a problem is the fact that not all idiomatic phrases can be associated with an image; hence the importance of associative imagination in the selection of idioms for the implementation of this technique (Samburskiy, 2020).

4. *Verbal techniques*: Put down efficacy in oral skills; this supports the development and hearing capacity, it is obtained through the practice of conversations, *role-plays (role-plays)*, songs, debates, comments and others. Its importance is based on the understanding of language, the fluency in the production of ideas, pronunciation and intonation (Williams, 1986).

### **Application of a New Culture of English Language Learning**

It is difficult to find a method that can improve English learning due to the diversity and complexity of this process. The hope lies in the formation of a New English Language Learning Culture (NELC) in students and teachers. This culture is called "new" because it is "new" to students and to most teachers who still have misconceptions about how the language is learned and taught.

The New Culture of Learning the English Language proposes to train excellent learners who feel the need to change the paradigm of learning to learn the language. Thus, the object of change is not simply the method, but the subject who studies the language (Acosta and

Gómez, 2017). Students need to know how to use all the technical, human and material resources available to learn English.

The term language learning culture has not been widely used in the world, but Acosta and Gómez (2017) as define it:

(...) A conscious process in the student, which goes hand in hand with critical self-reflection as the basis for decision-making, planning and action in learning. Students feel the need to find a way to learn the language, so they adapt to existing conditions to intensify the learning process and achieve better results in terms of language and communication (p.4).

According to Acosta and Gómez (2017), the NELC has a series of dimensions that compose it:

- *Students' beliefs about the language and its learning*. Students must be aware of the existence of two clearly different points of view in language learning: the traditional approach (structural and behavioral) and the communicative and interactive approaches, as well as the advantages of the latter. They can use exploratory and reflective approaches to learn English.
- *Learn English outside and inside the classroom*. Language learning must also take place outside the classroom, in different settings, with different resources, meeting people, using new technology, listening to voices asking and saying things, talking to oneself. Learning English requires many hours of interaction and reflection, listening and speaking, reading newspapers, magazines,

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- literature and writing sentences, ideas, texts.
- *The Psychology of Success in Language Learning.* A positive mind achieves better results in language learning. And Alfonso Acosta (2012) gives an essential role of psychological factors in the New Culture of Learning Languages. It stands out that psychology constitutes 70 % of the success and the method, only 30 % when learning English.
  - *Use of technologies to accelerate language learning.* Learning to learn with technology is a necessity for students as it offers many wonderful and engaging uses that can direct their attention to amazing topics.
  - *Language learning occurs through reflection in social interaction.* Acosta and Alfonso (2015) point out that language learning is the result of the process of reflective social interaction between the learner and other users of the language, the collaborative creation of meaning, experimentation with different ways of saying, the use of tasks based on interaction, activities focused on group work and work projects that require the integration of language and communication skills.
  - *The use of new strategies for learning languages.* Among the strategies that college students can use as part of the NELC are the following: learn English phrases and not isolated words; watch movies and *shows*, and reflects how language is used; ask others about the language and its actual use in communication; search for songs, poems, rhymes, slang, common phrases and formulas; repeating phrases several times, from slow to faster; analyze the actual use of English; hear phrases, copy and repeat.
  - *Connectivity with the world and with oneself through English.* Connectivity allows students to learn how real people use English. There is a cross-cultural effect of learning English when students search the *World Wide Web (www)*, or when they are in contact with someone who speaks English, or when they speak English to themselves while alone.
  - *The cultural level of the learner and its influence on learning the language.* The cultural level of the learner broadens the possibilities of learning the language because they can better understand the culture of the language they are learning and contextualize it appropriately.
  - *Humanism in learning English.* The key issue in learning English is the attitude of the students. A learner with a positive attitude has the will, energy and time to be successful in learning the language, while being motivated.
  - *Learn the actual use of the English rather than the language system.* The real use of English (Vigil, Acosta and Andarcio, 2020) is that which is used constantly, on a daily basis. Includes daily communication phrases such as slang, idioms, cultural references, filler words, natural English rhythm, jokes, double meanings, contractions, among other forms. It refers to that English that is rarely found in textbooks, which have been designed from the grammatical approach to learning the language.

The actual use of English has been the subject of research by several authors, among them the working group that Hoge has in the United States (2019) stands out, with a whole conception that it directly impacts all didactic components. In this sense, in Cuba, only the investigations of Acosta

and Gomez (2017), Vigil, Acosta, Anadarko, Dumpierres, and Licor (2020), Acosta and Vigil (2019) are recorded, who have put their ideas into practice through their book *Interactive English Use Learning*, used in the Integral Practice discipline of English Language and experimental courses in Pinar de Rio.

The theoretical and methodological foundations for the formation of the New Culture of English Language Learning in university students lead us to think that this is a good way to improve their learning of English in terms of communicative, interactive and intercultural competence.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was used combined quantitative paradigm, while experimentation and quantification and qualitative paradigm are used. Reality is interpreted from the social phenomenon regarding the use of idiomatic phrases and their incidence in the teaching-learning process of the actual use of English, to enhance the development of communicative, interactive and intercultural competence from the sociocultural context in which Third-year students of the Education of Foreign Languages career at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", Cuba learn.

Assumed the dialectic-materialistic as a general method, method and based on this, theoretical models were used: the historic- logic, systems, modeling and analysis and synthesis; As empirical methods, the following were used: documentary analysis, class observation and student survey. To this is added the participatory action research of the socio- critical paradigm, as the research professors get involved and share with the students and make

decisions to improve the product every day.

From the analysis of documents, the observation of classes and the survey, the process of teaching-learning of English was characterized in the Comprehensive Practice subject, from the learning culture, in the third- year students of the Foreign Languages Education career from the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", with an emphasis on the actual use of English and the use of idiomatic phrases as a resource for the development of the target competence. The survey took into account a rating scale : Always (S), sometimes(AV), almost always (CS), Never (N).

From this analysis a draft strategy was developed with methodological actions to implement the use of idiomatic phrases as a resource for learning the actual use of English in the English teacher training. The pre-experiment was used to evaluate the behavior and results of the strategy in pedagogical practice, for which it is evaluated on the Likert scale, where five is the highest value and one is the lowest.

Thus, the information provided by the instruments was processed and the strengths and weaknesses that exist in the Comprehensive Practice of the English Language were determined to contribute to the development of the actual use of English. This made it possible to identify the problem, marked by the scarce employment of work with the actual use of English and to identify the use of idiomatic phrases as a source for this purpose.

The population is made up of 6 teachers and 145 third-year students of the Foreign Languages Education career, from the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", Cuba. Finally, it was determined to use the simple random type probabilistic

sample. The sample was of a significant sample size (n = 63) with a 95 % confidence interval and a 7.5% margin of error. This group is made up of a total of three teachers and 60 students; of them 37 women (58.7 %) and 23 men (36.5 %) , with ages between 18-20 (95.2 %), 26 (1.6%) and more than 50 (3.2 %).

## RESULTS

### Diagnosis of the use of idiomatic phrases

Acosta and Gómez (2017) point out that one dimension of this new culture of language learning is precisely the emphasis on the actual use of English, and they propose the following indicators to measure this dimension, which have been adapted to learning idiomatic phrases:

- If taught and learned jargons, idioms, phrases common contractions, functions, interactions, functional grammar.
- If you listen to auditions of texts where idiomatic phrases are used.
- If texts specially prepared for this purpose or texts for real use are read.
- If the components of the texts of real use of the language are analyzed.
- If the traditional structural grammar or communicative and interactive methodologies are used.

In this regard, the method of document analysis revealed that:

The textbook used in the third year, *Integrated English Practic e II*, is rich in dialogues elaborated for learning English, which are used for listening and reading comprehension. Emphasizes traditional grammar, word formation and

pronunciation, with little attention to the components of real use of English: jargon, phrases commonly used in real situations, as well as texts, phrases, ideas, informal English, contracted forms, incomplete sentences and dialogues from movies and other sources with emphasis on usage.

On the other hand, idiomatic phrases are infrequent in the dialogues and those that appear are little used nowadays, highlighting the need for updating the materials, the issues are far from the needs and interests of students, while not reflect the richness of events in the world today. In short, the discipline program and the textbook do not fully consider the use of idiomatic phrases as a resource to stimulate the learning of the actual use of the language.

On the other hand, the classroom observation method, used to characterize the current state of the use of idiomatic phrases as a resource for teaching and learning the actual use of English, reveals that:

- The use of dialogues and texts of real use of the language for the auditions is low and the auditions of texts specially prepared for learning are high.
- The presence of idiomatic phrases is sporadic and infrequent, while common phrases and functions are limited to those suggested by the discipline program and the textbook.
- It often resorts to the explanation of traditional grammar structure, and not a functional grammar texts from oral and unmodified teaching.
- The analysis of the real use of English from oral and written texts not modified for teaching is not frequent.

The application of the survey to 60 students reveals the following data:

**Table 1-** Student survey

Items	Always	Almost	A V QSDS	Never
1. Frequency of the use of idiomatic phrases in learning English	5 8 %	12 20 %	23 39 %	20 33 %
2. Frequency of dialogues and texts that reflect the actual use of English	3 5 %	3 5 %	19 31 %	45 75 %
3. Frequency of exercises that facilitate the interpretation of idiomatic phrases	1 2 %	5 5 %	20 33 %	34 56 %
4. Frequency of the use of idiomatic phrases in daily communication	8 13 %	25 41 %	17 28 %	10 16 %
5. Frequency of interaction with teachers using idiomatic phrases	5 5 %	19 31 %	11 18 %	25 41 %
6. Frequency of supplementary materials showing actual use	9 %	6 %	37 %	48 %

7. Frequency of analysis of cultural referents in idiomatic phrases	1 2 %	6 10 %	17 28 %	36 60 %
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Note: All elements were analyzed from the teaching-learning process

### Methodological strategy for the use of idiomatic phrases

A methodological strategy based on actions aimed at the instrumentation of idiomatic phrases is proposed as an element inherent to the actual use of English. These actions have arisen from the practical experience of the authors in their use in the Integral Practice classes since the implementation of the Study Plan E (2017), in the Foreign Languages Education career, of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca".

### Basic actinos of the strategy

- Exploring the educational, linguistic, psychological and cultural interests, needs and potentials of students.
- Selection of understandable texts and dialogues containing current idiomatic phrases that respond to the needs of the students.
- Elaboration of interactive learning tasks, organized around communicative functions and idiomatic phrases.
- Assessment of the use of examples and tasks in order to specify their cognitive and affective impact on students.

### Complementary actions

- Familiarization of students with idiomatic phrases through reference to films, series, novels, poems and literary works.



- Dissemination of real English sources, programs, web pages, YouTube, authors of literature, themes, phrases, anecdotes and presentations in murals, classes, events and conversations with colleagues and students.
- Discussion about the socio historical context of the students using simple English, including idioms.
- Orientation of works with the sources that contain idiomatic phrases in real contexts outside the classroom.
- Analysis and use in context of idiomatic and colloquial phrases, structures with grammatical flexibilities, etc.
- Use of the classroom as a cultural center in its intercultural dimension.
- Promotion of the writing of dialogues, poems and short stories.
- Instrumentation of postgraduate courses aimed at teachers who need to deepen the real use of English and idiomatic phrases in the English language.
- Preparation of teaching materials with dialogues, videos, texts and understandable text summaries.

The strategy and its methodological actions will be based on the *Interactive Didactics of Languages* (Acosta and Alfonso, 2015), assumed as a methodological line of work of the Education Foreign Languages career. Therefore, the values of the examples and the reflective social interaction that are generated around them constitute the guiding principle for the design of the use of idiomatic phrases.

### **Texts and tasks for the real use of English**

The following activities are focused on the progress and understanding of the student, they are activities that

require the ability to speak (*speaking*). It is intended to motivate the creativity of the teacher and encourage them to create their own exercises based on idiomatic phrases for learning the real use of English. The idiomatic phrases are fun, they are creative and each one is unique, you do not have to master them all to demonstrate a good command of the language, only a few can help color the communication of each one of the learners, providing security and desires to improve.

### **Matching**

Goal: to recognize idiom meanings

Number of Participants: any number

Materials: teacher-made handout with idioms and definitions

Procedure:

1. Select up to ten idioms from this article or of your own selection.
2. Write the idioms on the left side of the paper (or board) and the definitions on the right side.
3. Ask students to write the letter of each definition next to the corresponding idiom.

Sample

- 1 . \_\_\_\_ Eleventh hour
  - 2 . \_\_\_\_ Keyed up
  - 3 . \_\_\_\_ Off the wall
  - 4 . \_\_\_\_ Take off
  - 5 . \_\_\_\_ Wet behind the ears
- a . unusual
- b . anxious

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c . beats

d . inexperienced

e . move quickly

### Multiple Choice

Goal: to recognize appropriate idioms in context

Number of Participants: any number

Materials: teacher-made handout with sentences and idioms

Procedure:

1. Select the idiomatic expressions.
2. Write a sentence using each idiom, but leave a blank space for the idiom.
3. Give students three or four idioms that might belong in the blank, and ask them to choose the correct one.

Sample:

1. Our company has been (losing money) for over three years now.

a . in the pink

b . in the red

c . in the black

d . in black and white

2. My father can do anything; he's a \_\_\_\_\_.

to. Jack of all trades

b . fish out of water

c . bull in a china shop

d . lick duck

### Sorting

Goal: to identify similarities

Number of Players: 16 in each group

Materials: teacher-made cards (30 per group) marked with idioms

Procedure:

1. Select about 30 idioms and write them on cards or slips of paper.
2. Write the same set of idioms for each group of five or six students.
3. Ask students to sort the idioms into categories by meaning.
4. Students can check this article or another source for the meanings, if necessary.

#### Variation 1 (Easiest)

Give students categories and tell them how many words are in each category. For example, "The categories are idioms about happiness, anger, sadness, and ill health. There are six in each category".

#### Variation 2 (Harder)

Don't give students any categories. Let them develop their own. Follow up by asking students to write their categories on the board. For example, "I'm not going to tell you the topics of the categories. Try to figure them out yourselves. You may come up with your own categories."

### Idiom-a-week

Goal: to notice selected idioms

Number of Participants: any number

Materials: none

Procedures:

1. Choose an idiom to be the idiom of the week.
2. Post the idiom somewhere in your classroom for all students to see, for example, at the top of your blackboard.
3. Students must find the meaning of the idiom in this article, in their dictionaries, on the internet, or in other resources.
4. Ask students to compare their findings with each other to see how many different ways the idiom is used.
5. Have students keep track of how many times they hear or read that idiom during the week.

**Idiom Journal**

Goal: to keep active, individualized lists

Number of Participants: any number

Materials: journal paper or writing books

Procedures:

Have each student keep an idiom journal. This is a list of idioms they have used, either in speech or writing. (If students are already keeping a vocabulary journal, have them designate a separate section just for idioms.)

*Variation 1*

Students can write down the idioms that they plan to use in the next week. They then can check them off once they have used them.

*Variation 2*

Students can keep track of how many times they have used a new idiom, either spoken or written.

*Variation 3*

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Students can use their journal to write down new idioms they discover. These new vocabulary items may come from films, books, magazines, or television. They can share and compare these with their classmates and then find their meanings in their resource books or on the internet.

*Note to Teacher:* An idiom journal is not just a list of phrases; it should be an interactive tool for learning. If students are actively engaged in their learning, they have a better chance of retaining learned material. By writing their own journals, students strengthen their own learning strategies and improve their opportunities for acquisition.

**Write an Idiom Story**

Goal: to use idioms in personal stories

Number of Participants: any number

Materials: paper

Procedure:

1. Have students think of an especially eventful day in their lives.
2. Tell them to turn to a partner and tell him / her about that day.
3. After both partners have talked, give students 20 to 30 minutes to write a narrative of the day's events: who they met, how they felt, what they did. (This can also be done as homework)
4. Have students read their own writing again, and add appropriate idioms to their stories.
5. Ask the students to exchange papers and read their partners' narratives. Have students suggest idioms that their partners might use, explaining why they think each idiom is appropriate.

6. Have each student tell the rest of the class what idioms they have used in their writing.

*Note to Teacher:* Contextualizing idioms is very difficult. Languages are so deeply connected to cultural identity and communication norms that non-native speakers have difficulty in using them correctly. This activity is for advanced speakers of English. It is not meant to be an activity with right and wrong answers. It is meant to give learners a chance to 'play' with idioms in the context of their own writing.

### Examples of idiomatic phrases

**a piece of cake / a piece of piss.** Really easy. This two are quite the same, but the first one is American and the other one is British.

1. *Don't worry, doing your homework was like a piece of cake for me.*

2. *It was a piece of piss, there's nothing to worry about.*

**a sucker for.** If you're a sucker for something / someone it means you love it, you need it, you adore him / her.

1. *I'm a sucker for chocolates.*

2. *He's sucker for romantic films.*

**at the end of the day.** Said before we give the most important fact or result from what we're talking about

1. *My parents want me to become a doctor, but at the end of the day it's my decision.*

2. *You don't get, do you? You may want me to become a teacher, but at the end of the day it's my decision.*

**break a leg .** Good luck

1. *Break a leg tonight, you're an amazing actor.*

2. *Break a leg in test, you're going to do it fine.*

**does / doing my head in .** Annoys / annoying me

1. *One thing it really does my head in is when people chew really loudly when they're eating, I can't stand that.*

**get a grip.** Make an effort to control your emotions or behave calmly

1. *You need to get a grip of yourself men, you actually need it.*

2. *We both need to get a grip of ourselves, we're not kids anymore.*

**head over heels in love.** Very much in love; uncontrollably in love

1. *Carl fell in love with Lucy the first time he saw her, and now he can't think about anything else. He's head over heels in love with her.*

2. *In the 1960s, many young girls in the United States and Europe fell head over heels in love with the pop singers the Beatles.*

**over the moon.** Extremely happy

1. *I was over the moon when I discovered her channel on YouTube, she may not know it but I am one of her greatest fans.*

2. *I was over the moon when I finished University, I was finally ready to face the world.*

**something / someone drives me around the bend.** Makes you bored or angry / annoyed

1. *Every time my sister gets into my room without knocking the door, it drives me around the bend.*

2. *My girlfriend's brother drives me around the bend with his stupid jokes.*

**take the piss.** Mock / joke / make fun of

1. *Don't take the piss.*

2. *We always used to take the piss out of him, now he is upset because of it.*

**work / working my ass off.** Work really hard

1. *I've been working my ass off to make that project.*

2. *She works her ass off in that magazine, she deserves a rest.*

**Table 2-** Results of the application of the strategy

Indicators	Before	Then	Difference
Student participation	2	4	2
Contextualization of the idiomatic phrase	4	5	1
Understanding	3	4	1
Use in new situations	3	5	2

## DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the questionnaire applied to 60 students, who fully agreed with their participation, he came to the following conclusion.

When asked how often they use idiomatic phrases in learning English, 5 (8 %) always point, while 20 (33 %) oppose

them who never point; it is valid to clarify that the students who indicate are always considered advantageous learners. Similarly, when asked how often in class dialogues and texts that reflect the actual use of English were used, 3 (5 %) always indicated, while 45 (75 %) indicated never, therefore it is not yet given. sufficient importance to what the learning of the actual use of English represents. Thus, when asked how often exercisers to facilitate the interpretation of idiomatic phrases, only 2 % say always, while 56 % say never; Interpretation is a weak ability in students, which helps the development of logical thinking in the use of language and its use in communication.

However, when asked how often they use idiomatic phrases in daily communication, 25 (41 %) point usually, while only 10 (16 %) point never; this translates into the pragmatic utility of idiomatic phrases in actual English communication. When asked how often idiomatic phrases are used in interactions with teachers, 5 (5 %) always, while 25 (41 %) never; It is interpreted that the teacher rarely encourages the student to use idiomatic phrases, diminishing his interest in his learning as part of daily communication. Similarly, when asked how often the supplementary materials show examples of actual use of English, 9 % of the materials always show actual use, while 48 % of these do not have examples of actual use, which reaffirms the need for materials that focus the teaching of the real use of English. When asked how often cultural referents in idiomatic phrases are analyzed, one (2 %) always, while 36 (60 %) never, which limits the possibilities of learning the language because they cannot properly contextualize the language culture.

The application of the strategy based on the use of idiomatic phrases, as part of the pre- experiment, in the context of training English teachers, brought benefits in that:

The effectiveness and appropriateness of the strategy was measured taking into account the following indicators: student participation, contextualization of the idiomatic phrase, understanding, use in new situations, for which the same evaluative scale remained. The results show an evaluation of four and five for all indicators.

In this sense, students recognize the value of the intensity of oral practice, which gives a new rhythm to the English language class, the interaction and reflection that are achieved in learning, as well as the value of the cultural element as basis for the contextualization of English which, in their opinion, offers a touch of real use to the language they are learning, which fortunately removes them from repetitive, formal and boring exercises on trivia that have nothing to do with their interests and social cognitive and affective needs.

Participation of the students observed led approach to real situations, with personal interweaving, which enables self-recognition and solidarity not only with characters to play, but certain actions and criteria, while rejecting certain behaviors. Participation rates were also positively affected with an increase in student participation in class.

The contextualization of idiomatic phrases, both in the dialogues and texts used in teaching, contain the actual use of English. These are not designed for didactic purposes so they are not adapted for language teaching. The student will always travel from the idiomatic phrases to the context, in a continuous going and coming from one to another, highlighting the communicative, linguistic, cultural and educational values, without losing sight of the fact that the objective is the learning of oral and written English in the understanding and production of socially contextualized discourses.

The understanding was based on the idea that every idiomatic phrase must be understandable by the students, satisfy their needs and at the same time provide a great cultural enrichment, because through them the students seize knowledge of their own culture, of the cultures of the peoples who speak the language they learn and of universal culture.

With its use in new situations, the student recreates a context and form feelings, values and beliefs. The actual use of English from idiomatic phrases is permeated by the culture, identity and idiosyncrasy of the person speaking through constant cultural references in the discourse; it is contextualized from individual and social circumstances that reveal reality.

The actual use of English is contextualized based on individual and social circumstances that reveal reality; it is expressed through a natural intonation, marked by the communicative intention and contains a vocabulary according to the situation and a flexible grammar.

The use of idiomatic phrases in English class in the context of language teacher training facilitates interaction with:

- General culture, the arts, politics, science, ethics and aesthetics.
- The traditions, values and history of the peoples.
- Real life, the world and its diversity.
- Real communication, social skills and norms of behavior.
- The actual use of English from different contexts (Latin American, Caribbean, African, North American, European).

It is widely accepted that the teaching and learning of idioms is considered one of the most difficult parts of vocabulary acquisition and at the same time one of the goals to achieve. The

objective of this article is to determine the incidence of idiomatic phrases with the teaching- learning process of the real use of English, promoting the development of communicative, interactive and intercultural competence from the sociocultural context in which third-year students learn of the Foreign Languages Education career, from the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". The application of each of the proposed activities allows us to observe that they have been developed according to the proposed objectives, which in turn is part of the methodological strategy that makes the appropriation effective, both of the actual use of English, and of the cultural elements that qualify the English language through the use of idiomatic phrases.

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Authors declare not to have any conflicts of interest.

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*Pedro Alejandro Vigil García:* Conception of the idea, authorship coordinator, literature search and review, translation of terms or information obtained, preparation of instruments, preparation of the database, writing of the original (first version), review and final version of the article, correction of the article.

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